

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
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O R 311518Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6389
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 4264

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NO, SV, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET ACTIVITIES ON SVALBARD

1. TWO NEW INCIDENTS BEARING ON THE EXTENT OF SOVIET
OBSERVANCE OF NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY ON SVALBARD CAME
TO LIGHT ON AUGUST 30-31. THE FIRST WAS THE DISCLOSURE,
BY A NORTHERN NORWAY NEWSPAPER, THE THE USSR HAD PLACED
A RADAR INSTALLATION AT THE BARENTSBURG HELIPORT. THE
SECOND INCIDENT, OF WHICH LITTLE IS YET KNOWN, IS THE
REPORTED CRASH OF A SOVIET MILITARY AIRCRAFT ON HOPEN,
A SMALL ISLAND IN THE SVALBARD ARCHIPELAGO.

2. THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAS PUBLICLY STATED THAT IT CON-
SIDERS THE RADAR INSTALLATION TO BE A CLEAR VIOLATION
OF PROVISIONS PERTAINING TO SVALBARD. FOREIGN MINISTER
FRYDENLUND, HAS ALSO BEEN QUOTED TO THE EFFECT THAT THE
RADAR STATION VIOLATES NORWEGIAN LAW AT SVALBARD. AT
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PRESENT, THE MATTER IS OSTENQIBLY BEING HANDLED BY THE
JUSTICE MINISTRY AS THE AGENCY CONCERNED WITH SVALBARD
ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS. MFA SOURCES, HOWEVER, STATE
THAT THE MINISTRY WILL HANDLE THE PROBLEM WITH THE
USSR.

3. THE INSTALLATION ITSELF, THE EMBASSY HAS LEARNED,

IS A RELATIVELY LIMITED (SIXTY MILE) RADAR OF THE TYPE GENERALLY ASSOCIATED WITH AIRPORT GROUND CONTROL OPERATIONS. IT WAS FIRST NOTICED BY THE ACTING DISTRICT GOVERNOR DURING A VISIT TO BARENTSBURG APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS AGO.

4. LITTLE IS YET KNOWN ABOUT THE AIR CRASH AT HOPEN. NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES ARE NOW REPORTEDLY AT HOPEN TO INVESTIGATE THE MATTER.

5. COMMENT: IN THE MATTER OF THE RADAR INSTALLATION, THE GON IS EVIDENTLY BASING ITS OBJECTIONS ON VIOLATIONS OF NORWEGIAN NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATIONS THE SOVIETS PRESUMABLY WILL RESPOND WITH THEIR USUAL CLAIM THAT THEY ARE ACTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR TREATY RIGHTS. THE AIR CRASH AT HOPEN MAY PRESENT AN EVEN MORE AWKWARD SITUATION, DEPENDING ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE USSR COOPERATES WITH THE NORWEGIAN INVESTIGATORS. A YEAR AGO, WHEN A SOVIET HELICOPTER CRASHED NEAR BARENTSBURG, THE SOVIETS IGNORED RELEVANT NORWEGIAN REGULATIONS CONCERNING REPORTS ABOUT AIR CRASHES, AND GAVE THE GON ONLY MINIMAL COOPERATION IN THE INVESTIGATION.
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